

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6/30/05

September 23, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:

Very late at night on September 22, 1971 (close to midnight), I received a phone call at home from Tsao saying that they wished to see me at 1700 on the following day. By mutual agreement, we keep phone conversations to a minimum.

On September 23 at 5:00 p. m. , I went alone and on foot to the Chinese Embassy and was as usual met at the open garden gate by Wei and at the entrance to the building by Tsao and the two of them ushered me into the red living room. Within a minute, the Ambassador joined us.

Unlike other occasions when they had a message for me, no portfolio was visible and small talk lasted much longer than when getting down to business on previous occasions.

Despite the press speculation on Chinese events which originated in Paris and the denial issued by the Chinese Embassy there that Mao was ill or dying, I did not bring up current events in China and neither did they.

The Ambassador said that there was a large Chinese colony in the United States, many had gone there during the great railroad building period in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. I said that they were one of the most law-abiding communities in the United States. Very rarely was one involved in criminal matters. He said that the Chinese were and are a very hard-working people. I agreed saying that very many of the Chinese who had come to the United States poor were now well-to-do. He said that many had gone also to British Guiana and Trinidad. I said I knew this because my mother was born in Trinidad. There the Prime Minister was black and the leader of the opposition was Indian, but the governor appointed by the British was Chinese. He got a chuckle out of that. He then said that the Prime Minister of Guiana was also of Chinese extraction. I said I was sure the Governor of Trinidad was Sir Robert Ho Tung, but I did not know that Mr. Burnham was also.

He then said that China ever since the Opium War in 1840 had been a European colony and exploited as such. I noted that this was no longer true and he grinned. He then said somewhat irrelevantly that this was the reason why the Chinese People were so peace-loving and anxious to see peace established everywhere.

He then said that he understood some French, a few words of English and some Russian but spoke it badly. I said I did, too, and we then spoke banalities in Russian. It was true in both cases. We both spoke it badly but this prevented me from having an inferiority complex. He then laughed aloud and said that no one would ever believe that the Chinese Ambassador to Paris and the American Defense Attache to France were talking together in Russian, but then no one had to know. He complimented me and poured my fifth cup of tea himself (first time). Then we got down to business. (All of the foregoing lasted considerably longer than indicated by this memorandum.)

He motioned to Tsao who reached under the sofa on which he was sitting and pulled out a black portfolio from which he extracted a single sheet of paper. He then started to read it to me in English. The Ambassador said that this was a waste of time and to hand it to me so I could copy it. This I then proceeded to do and read it back to Tsao to make sure there were no mistakes. There were three but we corrected them. While I was writing, I could feel them watching closely to see if there were any change of facial expression when I got to the tougher phrases. I made sure there was none.

When I was through, the Ambassador said that I must surely have used up the small strategic reserve he had given me on the previous occasions (an allusion to the preserved apples and dates). No General should ever be without reserves; Napoleon had said that God was on the side of the biggest battalions so I should have more. With that he produced a two-pound box of preserved apples made by the Peking City #1 preserved fruit factory (Peking Guo Fu). As the box of dates was all in Chinese, it was beyond my linguistic powers. He then explained to me that the dates had to be cooked inside the cellophane in a double-boiler. I did my best to appear enthralled and grateful.

The Ambassador then asked if I had been travelling recently. I said that on the long Labor Day Weekend of September 6th, I had gone to see the Chateaux of the Loire. He then asked whether I was

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- 3 -

busy in my duties as Defense Attache and I replied that the French vacation season was now over and my duties were at their normal level. All the while there was something faintly apologetic in his manner as though he feared perhaps that I might be offended by the tone of the note. This was largely a feeling on my part based on a considerable number of meetings with him. He asked how I had come and I said that I had left my car with the Diplomatic plates some distance away and had come on foot checking insofar as possible to see whether I was followed and if I had been I had not noticed it. He nodded approvingly and again said that he enjoyed talking to me. He put his arm on my shoulder and said good-bye. When he had more he would get in touch with me. I was escorted out in reverse order to arrival. They were as cordial or perhaps a touch more than on previous occasions.



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1. In view of the fact that the U. S. Government will, around September 23, put forward to the United Nations General Assembly its draft resolutions designed to create "Two Chinas" which the Chinese Government firmly opposes, the Chinese side cannot agree to the issuance of the press releases on the interim visit at the said time. The Chinese side agrees that the two sides issue their respective press releases on the interim visit at 2200 on October 5 (Peking Time) in the text agreed upon by the two sides.

2. The agenda and arrangements for the talks during the interim visit can be discussed and decided upon after Dr. Kissinger's arrival. The purpose of the talks to be held during President Nixon's visit to China was already officially announced on July 16, namely, "to seek the normalizations of relations between the two countries and also to exchange views on questions of concern to the two sides". It goes without saying that the talks should concentrate on the principal issues without diversion of attention to side issues.

3. The Chinese side will give a separate reply in regard to personnel arrangements and services for the special plane and other matters.